

RECOGNIZING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GIMENEZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a transformational partnership announced in my district between Florida International University and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

In what will become a national model for public-private collaboration to meet industry needs and further fuel the current momentum for technology and entrepreneurship in South Florida, the Knight Foundation has made a \$10 million gift and FIU a 10-year commitment of \$106 million to catalyze the development of the local tech ecosystem.

Today, FIU is Miami-Dade's top 50 public research university and is a top producer of minority graduates in STEM fields. This partnership will strengthen FIU's standing, allowing for the doubling of computer science graduates, researchers and making FIU a hub for research in artificial intelligence, smart robotics, bioinformatics, biodevices, and digital forensics.

I am proud of the work we did at the county level when I was the mayor of Miami-Dade County to make Miami and our South Florida communities a world-class destination for tech entrepreneurs. The resources and support for accelerators, incubators, our colleges and universities, and all the places that serve as creation centers for innovation through the use of technology has positioned South Florida as a leader in the economy of the future.

I look forward to everything this partnership between FIU and the Knight Foundation will do for our South Florida communities.

JAZZ & FRIENDS DAY OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY READINGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. CRAIG) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to participate in the HRC Foundation Welcoming Schools Jazz and Friends Day of School and Community Readings.

Each year, this day is meant to inspire caring community members to join together to affirm the rights of trans and non-binary youth and show support for LGBTQ children and youth to have safe, affirming, and welcoming schools and communities.

To take part in this year's readings, I am proud to stand on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to read from "When Aidan Became a Brother," by author Kyle Lukoff:

When Aidan was born, everyone thought he was a girl. His parents gave him a pretty name. His room looked like a girl's room. And he wore clothes that other girls liked wearing.

But as Aidan got bigger, he hated the sound of his name. He felt like his room belonged to someone else. And he always ripped or stained his clothes accidentally-on-purpose.

Everyone thought he was just a different kind of girl.

Some girls had rooms full of science experiments and bug collections.

Lots of girls didn't wear dresses.

But Aidan didn't feel like any kind of girl. He was really another kind of boy.

It was hard to tell his parents what he knew about himself, but it was even harder not to.

It took everyone some time to adjust, and they learned a lot from other families with transgender kids like him.

Aidan explored different ways of being a boy. He tried out lots of names until one stuck. They changed his bedroom into a place where he belonged. He also took much better care of his new clothes.

Then one day, Mom and Dad had something to tell him.

"I'm going to have a baby," Mom announced.

"A baby," Aidan said? "Does that mean I get to be the big brother?"

"Of course," said Dad, ruffling his hair.

Aidan thought that being a big brother was an important job for a boy like him. He wanted to make sure this baby would feel understood right away.

The baby needed clothes, so Aidan and his mom went shopping. There were so many choices! Would the baby like seahorses or penguins better?

"Are you having a boy or girl?" asked a lady.

Aidan didn't like it when people asked if he was a boy or a girl, and he hoped the baby couldn't hear yet. He was glad when Mom just smiled and said, "I'm having a baby."

The baby's room needed to be painted, so Aidan and his dad went to the hardware store. Dad chose a gallon of sky-blue paint, and Aidan added a puffy-cloud white.

"Are you excited for your new brother or sister?" asked the paint guy?

"I'm excited to be a big brother," Aidan said.

The paint guy looked confused. Aidan could tell that he wanted to ask a different question, and he was glad to have his dad there.

The big rollers were fun to paint with. "This room feels just like being outside," Aidan exclaimed. He had always felt trapped in his bedroom before they fixed it, but his new sibling wouldn't have to feel that way.

"You're right," said Dad. "Let's make some shapes in the clouds."

Every baby needs a name. Aidan loved getting to choose his own, but he remembered that it had been hard for his parents to let go of the name they gave him. He looked for names that could fit this new person no matter who they grew up to be.

Babies needed someone to read to them, so Aidan practiced and practiced and practiced.

Dad wanted to teach Aidan how to change diapers. "Um, maybe later," said Aidan. He decided that picking flowers for his mom was more important.

Two weeks before the baby's due date, Aidan started to worry. Maybe he should have picked different clothes. The blue walls might be too bright. He wished he could ask the baby which name they liked best.

Mom came to tuck him in. "Are you feeling okay, sweetie?" she asked.

Aidan put his hands over where he thought the baby's ears would be. "Do you think the baby will be happy with everything?" he whispered. "I don't want them to feel like I did when I was little, but what if I get everything wrong? What if I don't how to be a good big brother?"

Mom hugged him tight. "When you were born, we didn't know you were going to be our son. We made some mistakes, but you helped us fix them. And you taught us how important it is to love someone for exactly who they are. This baby is so lucky to have you, and so are we."

The next morning, Aidan found the boxes of his old baby pictures. He looked so different back then! It hadn't been easy, but he liked the boy he was growing into.

Maybe everything wouldn't be perfect for this baby. Maybe he would have to fix mistakes he didn't even know he was making. And maybe that was okay.

Aidan knew how to love someone, and that was the most important part of being a brother.

□ (1030)

REMEMBERING NOREEN REALE FALCONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of my dear friend Noreen Reale Falcone, who passed away on February 6, just shy of her 84th birthday.

Quite simply, Noreen led a remarkable life. She was a lifelong educator, a passionate philanthropist, and a cherished community leader who lived her life in service to others.

A Syracuse native, Noreen started her career working as an elementary school teacher. There she developed a passion for helping young people achieve their dreams and become well-rounded adults who strive to make the world more just and humane.

Even before she started teaching, Noreen always focused on philanthropy. Her family recounted a time to me when she was a child and received a new bicycle for Christmas. Instead of keeping it for herself, she gave it to someone less advantaged than her. That is Noreen.

In adulthood, she served on countless charitable boards, an incredible amount of boards that she was on. She also served as president of the board of trustees at Manlius Pebble Hill School and in a wide range of roles at her alma mater Le Moyne College.

In recognition of Noreen's contributions to education and her service to the community, in 1998, Le Moyne named its library the Noreen Reale Falcone Library.

Beyond her love for education and philanthropy, Noreen was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She leaves behind her beloved husband of 60 years, Michael, better known as Mickey, 4 kids, and 13 grandkids. She so loved her grandkids and her kids that she actually put statues in her yard so when they weren't there in the later years, she could look out and be reminded of them when she sees these statues. That is the kind of person she was.

She was also a woman of strong Catholic faith who was an active parishioner at St. Mary's of the Lake in